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ABSTRACT

Telephone surveys were conducted in Detroit and Grand Rapids, Michigan, to assess both the relative credibility of news presentations by the local news media and respondents' reasons for using these media. The results supported previous research on local news credibility, suggesting that television was the more believable medium, even in a local context. Although similar instruments were used in both cities, differences between Detroit and Grand Rapids credibility data suggested that cross-city comparisons may not always be valid. Different reasons for using media were found in the two cities, suggesting that future research in media credibility should consider the effects of media environment, life-cycle position, community size, and community structure on media use before considering credibility. The lack of perceived conflict in news presentation between local television and newspapers suggested that hypothetical conflict situations may not be valid assessments of credibility. (Author/RL)

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APPLES AND ORANGES: THE CREDIBILITY OF LOCAL TELEVISION AND NEWSPAPER NEWS SOURCES

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APPLES AND ORANGES: THE CREDIBILITY OF LOCAL TELEVISION AND NEWSPAPER NEWS SOURCES

Abstract

The authors conducted a telephone survey in Detroit and Grand Rapids, Michigan, to assess the relative credibility of news presentations by local television and local newspapers, as well as respondents' reasons for use of these media.

The results supported previous research on local news credibility which found television to be the more believable medium, even in a local context. In addition, although similar instruments were used in both cities, differences between Detroit and Grand Rapids credibility data suggested that cross-city comparisons may not always be valid.

The authors also found different reasons for media use in the two cities, suggesting that future research in media credibility should consider the effects of media environment, life-cycle position, and community size and structure on media use before considering credibility. They also found a lack of a perceived conflict in news presentation between local television news and newspapers, suggesting that hypothetical conflict situations may not be valid assessments of credibility, and that more relevant criteria for comparison, based on respondents' reasons for media use, should be employed.

APPLES AND ORANGES: THE CREDIBILITY OF LOCAL TELEVISION AND NEWSPAPER NEWS SOURCES

From the 1960's to the present day, television has continued to be self-described as the major source of news and the most believable mass medium for the majority of Americans. Research conducted by the Roper Organization, Inc., (Roper, 1977) and by academic social scientists (Carter and Greenberg, 1966; Greenberg, 1966; Jacobson, 1969; Westley and Severin, 1974; Wilson, 1977) has shown the rising dependence on and increasing credibility of television news.

Criticisms of the Roper studies and other similar research have centered on the point that the respondent's cognitive reference point for television is probably network news rather than local TV news, while the respondent's newspaper referent is not a national but a local newspaper (Greenberg and Roloff, 1974). Additionally, these studies have dichotomized the respondent's source of information into television OR newspaper (OR radio OR magazines, in some cases), failing to acknowledge the fact that, according to a recent survey by the Newspaper Advertising Bureau (Bogart, 1977), 70 percent of those who watch television news also read a newspaper regularly. Few studies have considered the quality and utility of the news gathered from each medium.

Abel and Wirth (1977), with the first criticism in mind, conducted a survey of the Detroit metropolitan area and specifically asked respondents to compare the local newspaper they read with the local television station they viewed. They used two methods to assess credibility: (1) a forced choice where the respondent had to select the medium s/he would believe when presented with

conflicting news reports, and (2) a separate assessment of each medium's "truthfulness" on a scale of 0 to 100 percent. The "importance" of news presented by each medium also was assessed using the same percentage scale. The researchers found that, even given the local context for comparison of newspapers with television, television was reported to be the more truthful medium as well as the medium that presented the more important news.

Reagan and Zenaty (1979) tested the Abel and Wirth "importance" and "truthfulness" scales in Grand Rapids, Michigan,[1] another major market, and included even more specific questions to better insure that respondents were comparing individual local TV station news with news in newspapers. They also assessed respondent's media use to see if such use was related to the perceived credibility and importance of television and newspapers.

Their results supported the Abel and Wirth findings that television is perceived to be a more credible, truthful and important source of local news than the newspaper, even given the local context of the comparison. The data were more extreme in favor of television in Grand Rapids, a one-newspaper market, than in the Detroit study, which suggested that the strength of the particular media involved and the number of media available in the market may affect credibility. Earlier studies in one-newspaper cities add ambiguous support. Lemert (1970) found that more residents of Eugene, Oregon, believed the newspaper as a local news source than television, while Stempel (1973) found that Zanesville, Ohio, citizens favored television slightly over the newspaper as a credible source of local news.

The present research expanded the Abel and Wirth and Reagan and Zenaty studies. Its purpose was threefold: first, to determine public perceptions of conflicting news reports, credibility ratings on various kinds of local news (political, foreign, labor) and other media consumption variables besides news credibility; second, to investigate the needs and uses people have for

newspapers and television, with emphasis upon the criteria for selection of each medium; and third, to compare data collected from a one-newspaper market with that gathered from a two-newspaper market, using the same instrument. The study tested the proposition, based on the Abel and Wirth and Reagan and Zenaty papers, that residents of the Grand Rapids area would rate television as more credible and having better coverage of political, foreign and labor news over newspapers than would Detroit area residents. They would rate the newspaper lower than Detroit residents.

METHOD

The survey research employed telephone interviews conducted by trained student interviewers using direct TELPAC lines at a midwestern university. Interviews were conducted simultaneously in Detroit and Grand Rapids, Michigan, February 20-23, 1978, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Systematic samples were selected from the Detroit Area and Grand Rapids Area telephone directories. Interviews were conducted with 329 adults in Detroit and 209 adults in Grand Rapids (completion rates of 72.0% and 67.9% respectively).[2]

The Detroit sample was composed of 36.0% males, 56.5% married, 43.6% who had some college or more, 70.7% who had incomes of $20,000 or less, 97.2% with working television sets and 76.6% with working color televisions. The mean age of the Detroit sample was 45.7 years.

The Grand Rapids sample was composed of 34.0% males, 66.0% married, 41.0% who has some college or more, 72.5% who had incomes of $20,000 or less, 98.6% with working television sets and 81.1% with working color televisions. The mean age of the Grand Rapids sample was 41.6 years.

Please refer to Appendix A for copies of the questionnaire used for each city.

Basically the questions were used to do seven things:

1) To determine if and why the respondent read a local metropolitan newspaper;

2) To determine if and why the respondent watched a locally produced local news program;

3) To determine if the respondent had noticed a conflict in the way the local newspaper and the local television news reported the same news story;

4) To assess the relative credibility of local newspaper vs. local television news in a "conflicting story" situation;

5) To assess respondent perceptions of how well each medium covered political, foreign and labor union news, using Stempel's (1973) rating scale;

6) To assess respondent's television, radio and movie use; and

7) To obtain demographic information.

The following dichotomous demographic and media-use variables were used in the analysis: education (high school or less/some college or more); gender (male/female); marital status (married/single); color television household (yes/no); television use on the previous day (0-2 hours/3 or more hours, rounded); radio use on the previous day (0-1 hour/2 or more hours, rounded); age (18-37 years old/38 or more years old); income ($0 through $20,000/more than $20,000). In all variables except gender, marital status and color TV household, an attempt was made to dichotomize the variable as close to the median as possible.

Percentage comparisons between subcategories of the demographic and media use variables and percentage comparisons between the two cities were compared for significant differences using the "difference-of-proportions test" (Blalock, 1972, pp. 228-232).

RESULTS

Media Use

Table 1 presents basic media use patterns for respondents in Detroit and Grand Rapids. Of the 329 Detroit respondents, 86.0% regularly read a metropolitan

daily newspaper, 72.1% watched network television news regularly, and 77.1% were regular viewers of local television news. In Grand Rapids, 79.9% were regular readers of the daily newspaper, 67.3% watched network news regularly and 70.4% regularly watched local news. None of the differences between cities are significant at the .05 level.

Similarly, none of the comparisons of mean hours of television and radio use, or movies attended, is significant. The Detroit sample watched an average of 2.83 hours of television and listened to 2.01 hours of radio during the previous day; respondents attended 0.667 movies in the previous month. In Grand Rapids, respondents viewed 2.72 hours of television, listened to 2.33 hours of radio and attended 0.614 movies.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Respondents in both cities were asked why they read a daily newspaper on a regular basis. Those results are presented in Table 2. "News in general" was given as the main reason for reading the newspaper in both cities (Detroit, 61.1%; Grand Rapids, 61.7%). In Detroit, the next two reasons given were "international news" (31.8%) and "what's going on" (18.7%), while in Grand Rapids "international news" was mentioned by less than 4% of the sample and "what's going on" by 10.8%. "Local news" (16.8%) was second among Grand Rapids respondents while it ranked 11th (4.9%) as a reason for Detroit respondents.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The top three reasons for watching television given by each sample were identical — "entertainment," "news in general" and "nothing else to do." Each reason was mentioned by at least 22% of the sample. Other reasons were also similar and are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Table 4 contains reasons given by respondents in both cities for watching a specific local television station's news program. "Personalities" of news people was the top reason given by Detroit respondents (28.8%), followed closely by how the station viewed "compared to other station's" news programs (23.9%). Grand Rapids respondents mentioned "comparison with other stations" most frequently (33.8%), while "personalities" ranked fourth in mentions (19.3%) beneath "local news" (23.4%) and "weather" (21.4%). Less than 4% of the Detroit respondents mentioned "local news," but 23.5% cited "news in general" as a reason for watching. Only 7% of the Detroit sample mentioned "weather."

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Within each city demographic comparisons were made to check for significant differences among reasons respondents gave for using the newspaper, television, and local television news. Of this large number of comparisons (144 in each city) less than 20% were significant at the .05 level.

Credibility and Coverage of News

Almost one-third (32.3%) of the 202 Detroit respondents who regularly read a local newspaper and watched a local news show reported that they had seen a conflict in the same news story presented by the two media. Only 22.0% of the 127 Grand Rapids respondents saw such a conflict. The difference between the two samples is significant ($p = .045$).

When confronted with a hypothetical forced choice between television and newspaper, residents in both cities regarded television as more believable than

newspaper in presenting news. However, more Grand Rapids residents perceived television as more credible (60.8%) than did Detroit residents (40.7%). Conversely, more Detroit residents (25.4%) reported newspaper as more believable than did Grand Rapids residents (11.7%). Both differences are significant ($p = .004$ for newspaper; $p = .0006$ for television). These percentages are similar to those gathered in the two separate studies of Detroit and Grand Rapids mentioned earlier.

Table 5 contains data for the two cities on perception of conflicts and perceived credibility, in addition to respondent ratings of newspaper and local television news on three coverage categories: political, foreign and labor unions. Three inter-city comparisons are significant: more Detroit residents rated their newspaper's coverage of labor union news as "good" than did Grand Rapids residents (35.0% vs. 24.4%; $p = .04$), while more Grand Rapids residents than Detroit residents rated their television station's coverage of both political news (75.5% vs. 65.5%; $p = .05$) and foreign news (61.4% vs. 47.3%; $p = .01$) "good."

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Conflict in News Stories

Detroit - None of the dichotomous comparisons is significant at .05 or beyond (see Table 6). However, those with lower socio-economic status (high school education or less, no color television, and lower income) as well as those who use television more heavily and radio more lightly, were more likely to see a conflict in news stories between television and newspapers.

Grand Rapids - None of the dichotomous comparisons is significant at .05 or beyond (see Table 7). Grand Rapids lacks the pattern evident in Detroit between socio-economic status, and media use and likelihood to see a conflict in

news stories. Higher educated respondents were more likely to see a conflict in news stories, but lower income respondents were also more likely to see such a conflict. Both the heavier users of television and radio were more likely to see news conflict.

Detroit and Grand Rapids - While there were no significant differences in the dichotomous comparisons within each city, differences across the two cities proved strikingly different (see Table 7). In all cases more Detroit respondents reported seeing conflicts between news presented in newspapers and on television. Four differences are significant.

TABLES 6 AND 7 ABOUT HERE

More Believable Medium

Detroit - Of respondents who chose the newspaper as more believable, those with color televisions, heavier users of television and lighter users of radio, younger, male, and single respondents were more likely to choose the newspaper as more believable than their counterparts (see Table 8). Of those who chose television as more believable single, young, heavier users of television and lighter users of radio were more likely to choose television as more believable than their counterparts.

When only newspaper and television choices were considered, only the two comparisons dealing with education were significant. Those with some college or more were more likely to choose the newspaper as more believable and less likely to choose television than those with a high school education or less.

In all cases, television was selected as more believable than the newspaper. One should also note that a considerable proportion could not make a choice between newspapers and television, choosing instead "both," "neither" or "don't know."

Grand Rapids - As in the "conflict in news stories," the Grand Rapids data is less clear (see Table 9). Those with high income are more likely to choose the newspaper as more believable, but those with higher education are not.

Lighter television users and heavier radio users were more likely to choose the newspaper as more believable and television as more believable. Younger respondents were more likely to choose television as more believable, while older respondents were more likely to choose the newspaper.

Males, married persons, and those without color televisions were more likely to choose newspaper than their counterparts. The opposite held true for television, with females, single persons and those with color televisions choosing television as more believable.

Only three of the comparisons were significant, two dealing with income and one dealing with age.

In all cases television was more likely to be chosen as the more believable medium.

As in Detroit, a considerable proportion of respondents chose neither the newspaper nor television.

Detroit and Grand Rapids - Differences between the two cities are more clear than in the "conflict in news stories" (see Table 9 and compare with Table 7). In all except one case (those without color television) Detroit respondents were more likely to choose the newspaper as more believable than Grand Rapids respondents, and in all cases Grand Rapids respondents were more likely to choose television as more believable. Most of these comparisons are significant.

TABLES 8 AND 9 ABOUT HERE

Conflict in News and Believability

In both Detroit and Grand Rapids those seeing a conflict in news were more likely to choose the paper as more believable and less likely to choose television as more believable when compared with those who did not see a conflict (see Table 10). However, these differences are not significant.

TABLE 10 ABOUT HERE

DISCUSSION

Several implications emerge from this study: (1) criteria for cross-media comparisons should be based on media content and use; (2) further research is needed to assess the relation between media credibility and media concentration; and (3) research on media credibility and use should take into account the effects of respondents' life cycle positions, and local community size and structure.

Media Comparison Categories

For the sake of replication, Stempel's (1973) news category rating scales were used. While television coverage of political, foreign and labor union news was rated higher than newspaper coverage in both cities, the fact that respondents never mentioned these news categories as a reason for using newspaper or local television news makes conclusions based on these ratings suspect. Categories of news coverage to be used for media comparisons cannot be made arbitrarily but should be based on content and reasons for use.

Lack of Conflict in News Presentations

Significantly more respondents in Detroit saw a conflict in news presentations by the two media than did respondents in Grand Rapids. This again raises questions about why such a difference existed. Were there indeed more conflicts in news presentations in Detroit than in Grand Rapids? Or were Detroit

respondents just more perceptive? Or did the fact that there was a difference in media use (e.g., more Detroit respondents read a metropolitan daily) or in the media environment (e.g., Detroit has two metropolitan daily papers while Grand Rapids has only one) affect access to possible conflicts in news reporting?

More interesting, however, is that only 32.2% of the Detroit respondents and 22.0% of those in Grand Rapids reported ever seeing a conflict in news presentations between television and newspaper. This means that over two-thirds of the respondents had not seen a conflict. It makes very little sense, then, to ask respondents the hypothetical question about which medium would be considered more believable when the conflict situation had never been perceived. Comparisons between the two media would make more sense if: (1) a conflict situation were discovered; (2) the research were narrowed to those who were aware of the conflict; and (3) respondents were then asked to select the more credible medium. It would be even more appropriate to identify the types of news each medium covered, to find out if respondents used both media as sources for such information, and then to ask for a rating of the performance of each medium.

Detroit respondents, in a two newspaper city, tended to rate the local newspaper as more believable than did respondents in Grand Rapids, a one newspaper city. As has been suggested by Reagan and Zenaty (1979), Lemert (1970) and Stempel (1973), the credibility of a newspaper may be related to competition in local newspaper outlets.

Perhaps even more generally, the credibility of any media is related to the competition within each medium. Local television news may be perceived as more credible because there is more competition in news outlets relative to the number of newspaper outlets. In Detroit, the choice is among six stations and only two metropolitan newspapers.

Detroit and Grand Rapids cannot be assumed to represent all one- and two-newspaper cities. Additional comparisons of media use and credibility should

be made in other cities. A comparative content analysis of monopoly and competitive newspapers should be conducted, in order to look for qualitative differences in their presentations of news.

Local vs. National Context

This study has confirmed previous research on the credibility of media in Detroit and Grand Rapids. In the Abel and Wirth (1977) study in Detroit, 43% chose television as more believable and 23% chose newspaper. In the present study 40.7% chose television and 25.4% chose newspaper. In Grand Rapids, Reagan and Zenaty (1979) found that 62% chose television as more believable and 7% chose newspaper. This study found that 60.8% chose television and 11.7% the newspaper. The instrument used to assess believability in this study was similar to that used in the previous studies.

These results are different than those in the most recent report by the Roper Organization (1977). Roper found that 51% chose television and 22% chose newspaper as more believable. The television percentage is higher than that for Detroit and lower than that for Grand Rapids. The newspaper percentage is lower than that for Detroit and higher than the one for Grand Rapids. (Of course, Roper also included radio and magazines as possible choices and did not focus on local television news.) This demonstrates considerable variability within the United States, and suggests that these national summary statistics should be applied with care to a local situation. It further suggests the need to carry out local research in media credibility.

Greenberg and Roloff (1974) suggested that the problem with the Roper studies was that believability questions did not focus the respondent on comparison of local media, the newspaper with local television news. Perhaps the respondent was comparing the local newspaper with network news. They suggested that in a local comparison the newspaper might fare better. Both Abel and Wirth and Reagan and

Zenaty found that even given the local context for comparison television continues to be rated as more believable. The research reported here continues to support those findings.

Greenberg and Roloff also proposed that people tend to go to television for entertainment and to newspaper for information, and that heavier users of newspaper would rate newspaper higher than heavier users of television. Reagan and Zenaty reported results that contradicted that proposition. They found that heavier users of television were more likely to rate newspaper as more believable.

While not significant, the present research found that in Detroit heavier users of television were more likely to rate both newspaper and television as more believable. Lighter users were more likely not to make a choice at all, saying "neither" or "don't know." In Grand Rapids (again not significant) lighter users were more likely to choose both the newspaper and television as more believable. This suggests that there is something beside "amount of media use" that relates to perceptions of media credibility.

Detroit and Grand Rapids respondents gave similar reasons for using television in general but vastly different reasons for using newspaper and local television news. Perhaps the focus of credibility research should not be on general media use, but on the use of specific portions of the medium. How much television news a person watches relative to other television use and to newspaper use may be a more relevant criterion for investigation.

Detroit and Grand Rapids differ substantially in size and community structure. Olien, Donohue and Tichenor (1978) stated that the size and structure of a community tend to shape the uses citizens make of newspapers and television and their relative preferences as well. Hence, reasons for media use cited by residents of Detroit and Grand Rapids should have been different.

In response to a need to determine the effects of community size and structure on other media, a study of media environments has been proposed by Abel and Baldwin (1978). It attempts to classify different media environments in terms of availability of media in a particular community. Individuals in each of the communities will be asked to provide extensive information on their use of media and perceptions of the media environments, in addition to their perceptions of media intimacy and their reasons for media selection. The researchers expect to find significant differences in media use and selection across the different environments.

Dimmick, McCain and Bolton (1978) did not concern themselves with comparisons among media environments, but rather with comparisons among respondents. They developed the uses and gratifications paradigm in terms of a life-span perspective, suggesting that the range of media uses will be influenced by respondents' positions in the life cycle:

> ...the available evidence suggests that the use of television and newspapers for information content is very low in childhood, rises somewhat in adolescence and young adulthood and reaches its peak in the years just prior to retirement age, after which the change may become decremental. The hypothesized change function relating media use to life-cycle position is curvilinear in form. (p. 17)

Summary

This study suggests that researchers should be aware of the "fruit basket" nature of variables and environments within the area of news credibility and media comparisons.

Can the coverage of various news categories by newspapers in two different cities be compared by readers using the same scale? Are the newspapers apples and oranges which cannot be compared?

Can conflicts in news reporting be compared across two cities? Does a difference in media environments affect both media consumption and use patterns, making the comparison an apples-and-oranges situation? A monopoly newspaper in one city may not be similar to two competitive newspapers in another -- is it fair to expect an apple to be an orange?

The application of national summary statistics to local situations seems to assume that the generic definition of an orange adequately describes Florida and California oranges, naval and valencia, tangelo and tangerine. To assume that all respondents have similar reasons for using certain media is as valid as making applesauce from oranges.

We are definitely not suggesting the abandonment of studies of news credibility and media comparisons. Instead, we hope that closer attention to the bases for valid comparisons of variables in this area will help simplify future studies and facilitate the development of workable theories.

(We don't want anyone else to go bananas in the midst of interpreting this research.)

NOTES

1. Differences between the Detroit and Grand Rapids markets should be noted: Detroit has 1,544,200 TV households, 8 TV stations, 21 FM stations, 8 AM stations, 2 metropolitan daily newspapers, and no cable TV system; Grand Rapids has 454,500 TV households, 4 TV stations, 10 FM stations, 6 AM stations, 1 metropolitan daily, and cable TV systems in several areas of the market. (Broadcasting Yearbook, 1977; Cable Sourcebook, 1977).

2. There were 21.0% refusals and 7.0% no answer in the Detroit sample, and 13.6% refusals and 18.5% no answer in the Grand Rapids sample.

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TABLE 1: Media Use

	Detroit		Grand Rapids	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
Read a metropolitan daily	86.0	(329)	79.9	(209)
Watch network news regularly	72.1	(312)	67.3	(205)
Watch local news regularly	77.1	(315)	70.4	(206)
	Mean	**(n)**	**Mean**	**(n)**
Hours of television previous day	2.83	(312)	2.72	(203)
Hours of radio previous day	2.01	(324)	2.33	(206)
Number of movies attended previous month	.667	(327)	.614	(207)

TABLE 2: Reasons for Reading a Metropolitan Daily Newspaper (Multiple Responses Allowed)

Detroit (n=283)		Grand Rapids (n=167)	
Reason	%	Reason	%
News in General	61.1	News in General	61.7
International News	31.8	Local News	16.8
What's Going On	18.7	Ads in General	15.0
Specific Sections (other than sports, woman's and comics)	11.0	Habit	13.2
Ads in general	10.2	What's Going On	10.8
Sports	10.2	Sports	10.8
Enjoy/Recreation	7.8	Specific Sections (other than sports, woman's and comics)	9.6
Habit	7.1	Entertainment	8.4
Other/Miscellaneous	6.7	Other/Miscellaneous	7.2
Entertainment	6.0	Enjoy/Recreation	4.2
Local News	4.9		
Comics	4.9		
Woman's Section	4.6		

TABLE 3: Reasons for Watching Television (Multiple Responses Allowed)

Detroit (n=318)		Grand Rapids (n=206)	
Reason	%	Reason	%
Entertainment	54.1	Entertainment	53.4
News in General	28.0	News in General	31.1
Nothing Else To Do	22.0	Nothing Else To Do	25.7
Enjoy/Relax	14.8	Specific Programs	13.6
Specific Programs	14.5	Enjoy/Relax	7.8
Education	8.2	Education	7.8
Sports	5.0	Sports	5.8
For Company	5.0	Other/Miscellaneous	5.3
Other/Miscellaneous	4.1	Habit	4.9
		Local News/Sports/ Weather	4.9

TABLE 4: Reasons for Watching a Specific Local Television Station's News Program (Multiple Responses Allowed)

Detroit (n=243)		Grand Rapids (n=145)	
Reason	%	Reason	%
Personalities	28.8	Compare to Other Stations	33.8
Compare to Other Stations	23.9	Local News	23.4
News in General	23.5	Weather	21.4
Just Like It	10.3	Personalities	19.3
Presentation	9.9	News in General	15.9
Weather	7.0	Habit	6.2
Other	6.6	Other	4.1
Audience Flow	4.1	Sports	4.1

TABLE 5: Perception of Conflicts in News Stories, Credibility, and Coverage of the Metro Newspaper and the Local Newscast

	Detroit		Grand Rapids		
	%	(n)	%	(n)	p
Ever see a conflict in news stories	32.2	(202)	22.0	(127)	.045
If a conflict, which medium believed:					
Newspaper	25.4	(189)	11.7	(120)	.004
Television	40.7		60.8		.0006
Both	5.8		2.5		ns
Neither	10.6		5.0		ns
Don't Know	17.5		20.0		ns
Coverage of news (percent saying "good"):					
NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF:					
Political news	51.7	(203)	52.0	(127)	ns
Foreign news	46.6	(204)	38.6	(127)	ns
Labor union news	35.0	(203)	24.4	(127)	.04
TV COVERAGE OF:					
Political news	65.5	(203)	75.6	(127)	.05
Foreign news	47.3	(205)	61.4	(127)	.01
Labor union news	39.5	(205)	37.0	(127)	ns

TABLE 6: Comparison of Demographics With Perception of Conflict in News Stories (Detroit)

	See Conflict in News Stories? Yes %	No %	(n)
Education:			
High School or Less	35.1	64.9	(114)
Some College or More	28.2	71.8	(85)
Gender:			
Male	36.2	63.8	(58)
Female	32.1	67.9	(134)
Marital Status:			
Married	32.5	67.5	(116)
Single	32.0	68.0	(75)
Color TV Household:			
Yes	30.4	69.6	(161)
No	37.5	62.5	(40)
Television Use (Previous Day):			
0-2 Hours	28.7	71.3	(94)
3 or More Hours	36.2	63.8	(105)
Radio Use (Previous Day):			
0-1 Hour	33.1	66.9	(121)
2 or More Hours	30.4	69.6	(79)
Age:			
18-37 Years	34.6	65.4	(78)
38 or More Years	30.6	69.4	(124)
Income:			
Less or Equal to $20,000	32.4	67.6	(111)
More Than $20,000	26.9	73.1	(51)

Note: None of the dichotomous variable comparisons is significant at .05 or beyond.

TABLE 7: Comparison of Demographics With Perception of Conflict in News Stories (Grand Rapids)

	See Conflict in News Stories?			Comparison between Detroit and Grand Rapids (Tables 6 & 7)
	Yes %	No %	(n)	p
Education:				
High School or Less	19.4	80.6	(72)	.022
Some College or More	25.0	75.0	(52)	ns
Gender:				
Male	26.8	73.2	(41)	ns
Female	18.8	81.2	(85)	.031
Martial Status:				
Married	22.8	77.2	(92)	ns
Single	20.6	79.4	(34)	ns
Color TV Household:				
Yes	22.9	77.1	(109)	ns
No	17.6	82.4	(17)	ns
Television Use (Previous Day):				
0-2 Hours	23.0	77.0	(61)	ns
3 or More Hours	20.3	79.7	(64)	.029
Radio Use (Previous Day):				
0-1 Hour	26.8	73.2	(71)	ns
2 or More Hours	16.4	83.6	(55)	.064
Age:				
18-37 Years	26.5	73.5	(49)	ns
38 or More Years	22.1	77.9	(68)	ns
Income:				
Less or Equal to $20,000	24.1	75.9	(58)	ns
More than $20,000	14.7	85.3	(34)	ns

Note: None of the dichotomous variable comparisons is significant at .05 or beyond.

TABLE 8: Comparison of Demographics With Perception of Most Believable Medium (Detroit)

	More Believable Medium:					
	Paper %	TV %	Both %	Neither %	Don't Know %	(n)
Education:						
High School or Less	18.9**	48.1*	7.5	8.5	17.0	(106)
Some College or More	33.8	31.3	2.5	13.8	18.8	(80)
Gender:						
Male	30.4	33.9	7.1	8.9	19.6	(56)
Female	24.4	43.1	4.1	11.4	17.1	(123)
Martial Status:						
Married	22.4	39.7	6.9	11.2	19.8	(116
Single	31.9	44.9	1.4	8.7	13.0	(69)
Color TV Household:						
Yes	28.0	40.0	5.3	10.0	16.7	(150)
No	15.8	42.1	7.9	13.2	21.1	(38)
Television Use (Previous Day):						
0-2 Hours	23.0	37.9	3.4	16.1***	19.5	(87)
3 or More Hours	27.3	44.4	8.1	5.1	15.2	(99)
Radio Use (Previous Day):						
0-1 Hours	27.7	43.8	5.4	10.7	12.5**	(112)
2 or More Hours	22.7	37.3	4.0	10.7	25.3	(75)
Age:						
18-37 Years	27.8	44.4	4.2	11.1	12.5	(72)
38 or More Years	23.9	38.5	6.8	10.3	20.5	(117)
Income:						
Less or Equal $20,000	22.6	44.4	4.1	12.2	18.4	(106)
More Than $20,000	32.7	32.7	4.1	12.2	18.4	(49)

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .02$
*** $p \leq .01$

TABLE 9: Comparison of Demographics With Perception of More Believeable Medium (Grand Rapids)

	More Believable Medium:						Comparison Between Detroit and Grand Rapids (Tables 8 & 9)	
	Paper %	TV %	Both %	Neither %	Don't Know %	(n)	Paper p	TV p
Education:								
High School or Less	13.6	69.5	3.4	3.4	10.2	(59)	ns	.008
Some College or More	12.5	62.5	2.1	8.3	14.6	(48)	.008	.0006
Gender:								
Male	16.2	59.5	2.7	8.1	13.5	(37)	ns	.015
Female	9.8	61.0	2.4	3.7	23.2	(82)	.008	.012
Marital Status:								
Married	14.8	59.1	2.3	6.8	17.0	(88)	ns	.006
Single	3.2	64.5	3.2	0.0	29.0	(31)	.002	ns
Color TV Household:								
Yes	10.6	60.6	2.9	4.8	21.2	(104)	.0008	.001
No	20.0	60.0	0.0	6.7	13.3	(15)	ns	ns
Television Use (Previous Day):								
0-2 Hours	12.1	63.8	1.7	5.2	17.2	(58)	ns	.002
3 or More Hours	11.7	60.0	3.3	5.0	20.0	(60)	.02	.057
Radio Use (Previous Day):								
0-1 Hour	4.8	54.4	[illegible].4	7.4	22.1	(68)	.0001	ns
2 or More Hours	11.5	69.2	0.0	1.9	17.3	(52)	ns	.0004
Age:								
18-37 Years	9.1	70.9*	1.8	5.5	12.7	(55)	.009	.003
38 Years or More	13.8	52.3	3.1	4.6	26.2	(65)	ns	ns
Income:								
Less or Equal to $20,000	6.3*	70.3*	3.1	6.3	14.1	(64)	.005	.001
More Than $20,000	19.4	48.4	0.0	6.5	25.8	(31)	ns	ns

* $p \leq .05$

TABLE 10: Comparison of Perception of Conflict in News Coverage With More Believable Medium

DETROIT

		More Believable Medium: Newspaper %	Television %	(n)
See Conflict in News Stories:	Yes	47.5	52.5	40
	No	34.5	65.5	84

GRAND RAPIDS

		More Believable Medium: Newspaper %	Television %	(n)
See Conflict in News Stories:	Yes	21.1	78.9	19
	No	14.7	85.3	68

APPENDIX A

Sample Questionnaires

Detroit and Grand Rapids

(NOTE: Questionnaires were originally printed on 8-1/2 X 14 inch paper.)

TC 355
WINTER 1978

COLS.

GRAND RAPIDS MEDIA USE

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 174- _____

ID NUMBER: _____ 1-3

CALLBACKS: 1 2 3 4 5 6

STATUS OF INTERVIEW

COMPLETED (1)
REFUSED (2)
DISCONNECTED (3)

ZENATY/REAGAN (517) 353-3288

INTRODUCTION: Hello I'm _____ calling long distance from Michigan State University. We're doing a study of newspaper and television use in the Grand Rapids area and I have a few questions I'd like to ask you.

1. Do you regularly read the Grand Rapids Press?

(1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 3) (3) DK (GO TO Q. 3) 4

2. Would you please tell me why you read a newspaper on a regular basis? (CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED)

(1)	NEWS IN GENERAL	5
(1)	INTERNATIONAL NEWS	6
(1)	NATIONAL NEWS	7
(1)	STATE NEWS	8
(1)	LOCAL NEWS	9
(1)	GROCERY ADS	10
(1)	ADS IN GENERAL	11
(1)	SPORTS	12
(1)	ENTERTAINMENT	13
(1)	POLITICAL NEWS	14
(1)	LABOR NEWS	15
(1)	COMICS	16
(1)	MOVIE GUIDE	17
(1)	TV GUIDE	18
(1)	TO KILL TIME	19
(1)	STOCKS/BUSINESS NEWS	20
(1)	RELIGIOUS NEWS	21
(1)	OTHER: _____	22 - 28

_____

_____

(PROBE: Are there any other revisions?)

3. Do you have a working television set?

(1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q.20) (3) DK (GO TO Q.20) 30

4. Do you have a working color television?

(1) YES (2) NO (3) DK 31

5. About how many hours of television did you watch yesterday?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9+ 32

6. Would you please tell me why you watch television

(1) ENTERTAINMENT 33
(1) NEWS IN GENERAL 34
(1) NATIONAL (NETWORK) NEWS 35
(1) LOCAL NEWS/SPORTS/WEATHER 36
(1) SPORTS 37
(1) FILMS 38
(1) STOCKS/BUSINESS REPORTS 39
(1) ADS 40
(1) EDUCATION 41
(1) CULTURAL 42
(1) NOTHING ELSE TO DO 43
(1) OTHER: _____ 44 - 49

_____

_____

(PROBE: Are there any other reasons?)

7. Do you regularly watch a network news program produced by NBC, CBS or ABC?

(1) YES (2) NO (3) DK 50

8. Do you regularly watch an early or late evening news program produced by a local Grand Rapids TV station?

(1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 20) (3) DK (GO TO Q.20) 51

9. Which station's news program do you watch most often? (CIRCLE ONE)

CHANNEL:	3	41	8	13
	WKZO	WUHQ	WOTV	WZZM
	CBS	ABC	NBC	ABC

10. Would you please tell me why you watch Channel _____'s (THEIR FAVORITE NEWS STATION) local news program?

(1) NEWS IN GENERAL 52
(1) INTERNATIONAL NEWS 53
(1) NATIONAL NEWS 54
(1) STATE NEWS 55
(1) LOCAL NEWS 56
(1) POLITICAL NEWS 57
(1) SPORTS 58
(1) WEATHER 59
(1) EDITORIAL 60
(1) FEATURES 61
(1) OTHER: _____ 62 - 64

_____

_____

(PROBE: Are there any other reasons?)

(IF THE RESPONDENT STATES THAT HE/SHE READS THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS AND WATCHES A LOCAL STATION'S NEWS PROGRAM ASK QUESTIONS 11 - 19. OTHERWISE SKIP TO QUESTION 20.)

11. Have you ever noticed a conflict in the way The Grand Rapids Press and Channel _____ (THEIR FAVORITE NEWS STATION) have reported the same news story?

(1) YES (2) NO (3) DK 65

12. If you did get conflicting reports on a news story from The Grand Rapids Press and Channel _____ (THEIR FAVORITE NEWS STATION), which one would you believe, the newspaper story or the television news story?

(1) NEWSPAPER
(2) TV
(3) BOTH
(4) NEITHER
(5) DK 66

13. I now have some questions which ask you to rate the coverage of various news events by your newspaper and your local television news station, on a scale of good, fair or poor.

14. Would you say the coverage of local political events in Grand Rapids by the Grand Rapids Press is good, fair or poor?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 67

15. Is coverage of foreign news by the Grand Rapids Press good, fair or poor?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 68

16. How would you rate coverage of news of labor union activities by the Grand Rapids Press?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 69

17. Would you say the coverage of local political events in Grand Rapids by Channel _____ (THEIR FAVORITE NEWS STATION) is good, fair or poor?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 70

18. Is coverage of foreign news by Channel _____(THEIR TV NEWS STATION) good, fair, or poor?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 71

19. How would you rate coverage of news of labor union activities by Channel _____ (THEIR TV NEWS STATION)?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 72

Now just a few more questions . . .

20. About how many hours of radio did you listen to yesterday?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9+ 73

21. How many movies did you go to in the last month?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9+ 74

22. Are you married or single?

MARRIED (1) SINGLE (2) 75

23. How much education have you completed?

THRU 8TH (1) COLLEGE DEGREE (5)
9TH - 12TH (2) GRADUATE WORK (6)
H.S. DEGREE (3) GRADUATE DEGREE (7) 76
SOME COLLEGE (4)

24. Would you please tell me your age?

(_____) (ROUND TO NEAREST YEAR) 77 - 78

25. Would you tell me if your household income is more or less than $10,000?

(1) Less Than $10,000 (GO TO Q. 26)

(-) More Than $10,000 → 79

25a. Is it more than $20,000

(2) No (GO TO Q.26)

(-) Yes →

25b. And finally, is it more than $20,000?

(3) No (GO TO Q.26)

(4) Yes (GO TO Q. 26)

(5) STUDENT

(6) RETIRED

(7) UNEMPLOYED

(8) DON'T KNOW

(9) REFUSED

26. Thank you very much for your help.

27. RECORD SEX: (1) MALE (2) FEMALE 80

IC 333

WINTER 1978
DETROIT MEDIA USE

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 171-_____

ID NUMBER: _____ 1-3

CALLBACKS: 1 2 3 4 5 6

STATUS OF INTERVIEW

COMPLETED (1)
REFUSED (2)
DISCONNECTED (3)

ZENATY/REAGAN (517) 353-3288

INTRODUCTION: Hello I'm _____ calling long distance from Michigan State University. We're doing a study of newspaper and television use in the Detroit area and I have a few questions I'd like to ask you.

1. Do you regularly read the Detroit Free Press or the Detroit News?

(1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 3) (3) DK (GO TO Q. 3) 4

2. Would you please tell me why you read a newspaper on a regular basis? (CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED)

(1) NEWS IN GENERAL 5

(1) INTERNATIONAL NEWS 6

(1) NATIONAL NEWS 7

(1) STATE NEWS 8

(1) LOCAL NEWS 9

(1) GROCERY ADS 10

(1) ADS IN GENERAL 11

(1) SPORTS 12

(1) ENTERTAINMENT 13

(1) POLITICAL NEWS 14

(1) LABOR NEWS 15

(1) COMICS 16

(1) MOVIE GUIDE 17

(1) TV GUIDE 18

(1) TO KILL TIME 19

(1) STOCKS/BUSINESS NEWS 20

(1) RELIGIOUS NEWS 21

(1) OTHER: _____ 22 - 28

(PROBE: Are there any other reasons?)

2a. As a source of news, which newspaper do you read most often, the News or Free Press?

(1) NEWS (2) FREE PRESS 29

3. Do you have a working television set?

(1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 20) (3) DK (GO TO Q.20) 30

4. Do you have a working color television?

(1) YES (2) NO (3) DK 31

5. About how many hours of television did you watch yesterday?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9+ 32

6. Would you please tell me why you watch television?

(1) ENTERTAINMENT 33

(1) NEWS IN GENERAL 34

(1) NATIONAL (NETWORK) NEWS 35

(1) LOCAL NEWS/SPORTS/WEATHER 36

(1) SPORTS 37

(1) FILMS 38

(1) STOCKS/BUSINESS REPORTS 39

(1) ADS 40

(1) EDUCATION 41

(1) CULTURAL 42

(1) NOTHING ELSE TO DO 43

(1) OTHER: _____

_____ 44 - 49

(PROBE: Are there any other reasons?)

7. Do you regularly watch a network news program produced by NBC, CBS or ABC?

(1) YES (2) NO (3) DK 50

8. Do you regularly watch an early or late evening news program produced by a local Detroit TV station?

(1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 20) (3) DK (GO TO Q. 20) 51

9. Which station's news program do you watch most often? (CIRCLE ONE)
CHANNEL:

2	4	7	9
WJBK	WWJ	WXYZ	CBET
CBS	NBC	ABC	CBC-CANADA
20	50	56	62
WXON	WKBD	WTVS	WGPR
IND	IND	PBS	IND

10. Would you please tell me why you watch Channel _____ 's (THEIR FAVORITE NEWS STATION) local news program?

(1) NEWS IN GENERAL 52

(1) INTERNATIONAL NEWS 53

(1) NATIONAL NEWS 54

(1) STATE NEWS 55

(1) LOCAL NEWS 56

(1) POLITICAL NEWS 57

(1) SPORTS 58

(1) WEATHER 59

(1) EDITORIAL 60

(1) FEATURES 61

(1) OTHER: _____ 62 - 64

_____

_____

(PROBE: Are there any other reasons?)

(IF THE RESPONDENT STATES THAT HE/SHE READS THE FREE PRESS OR THE NEWS AND WATCHES A LOCAL STATION'S NEWS PROGRAM ASK QUESTIONS 11 - 19. OTHERWISE SKIP TO QUESTION 20)

11. Have you ever noticed a conflict in the way _____(THEIR NEWSPAPER) and channel _____ (THEIR FAVORITE NEWS STATION) have reported the same news story?

(1) YES (2) NO (3) DK 65

12. If you did get conflicting reports on a news story from _____ (THEIR NEWSPAPER) and Channel _____ (THEIR FAVORITE NEWS STATION), which one would you believe, the newspaper story or the television news story?

(1) NEWSPAPER 66

(2) TV

(3) BOTH

(4) NEITHER

(5) DK

13. I now have some questions which ask you to rate the coverage of various news events by your newspaper and your local television news station, on a scale of good, fair or poor.

14. Would you say the coverage of local political events in Detroit by the (THEIR PAPER) is good, fair or poor?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 67

15. Is coverage of foreign news by the _____ (THEIR PAPER) good, fair or poor?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 63

16. How would you rate coverage of news of labor union activities by the _____ (THEIR PAPER)?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 69

17. Would you say the coverage of local political events in Detroit by Channel _____ (THEIR FAVORITE NEWS STATION) is good, fair or poor?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 70

18. Is coverage of foreign news by Channel _____ (THEIR TV NEWS STATION) good, fair or poor?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 71

19. How would you rate coverage of news of labor union activities by Channel _____ (THEIR TV NEWS STATION)?

(1) GOOD (2) FAIR (3) POOR (4) DK 72

Now just a few more questions . . .

20. About how many hours of radio did you listen to yesterday?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9+ 73

21. How many movies did you go to in the last month?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9+ 74

22. Are you married or single?

MARRIED (1) SINGLE (2) 75

23. How much education have you completed?

THRU 8TH (1) COLLEGE DEGREE (5)
9TH - 12TH (2) GRADUATE WORK (6)
H.S. DEGREE (3) GRADUATE DEGREE (7) 76
SOME COLLEGE (4)

24. Would you please tell me your age?

(____) (ROUND TO NEAREST YEAR) 77 - 78

25. Would you tell me if your household income is more or less than $10,000?

(1) Less than $10,000 (GO TO Q. 26)
(-) More than $10,000 →

25a. Is it more than $20,000?
(2) NO (GO TO Q. 26)
(-) YES → 79

25b. And finally, is it more than $30,000?
(3) NO (GO TO Q. 26)
(4) YES (GO TO Q. 26)

(5) STUDENT
(6) RETIRED
(7) UNEMPLOYED
(8) DON'T KNOW
(9) REFUSED

26. Thank you very much for your help.

27. RECORD SEX: (1) MALE (2) FEMALE 80